

446

Department of Correction

Testimony of Brian K. Murphy, Acting Commissioner

Judiciary Committee

Raised Bill No. 446, *An Act Concerning Child Support Orders, Enforcement and Reports*

March 15, 2010

The Department of Correction supports Raised Bill No. 446, *An Act Concerning Child Support Orders, Enforcement and Reports*.

The Department was an active participant on the Judicial Branch Problem Solving in Family Matters Committee, which looked at barriers to the collection of child support obligations.

The Department of Correction is working with Support Enforcement Services to help reduce the oversized debt of child support. With the proposed provisions in Raised Bill No. 446 that would enable information sharing among agencies, the Department of Correction would be better positioned to know who among the incarcerated population has child support obligations. The Department would then be able to educate the inmate about his or her child support obligations and the fact that such obligations do not stop during a period of incarceration. The Department would also be able to assist the inmate with making applications for child support modification, which may encourage payment.

The Department of Correction would also be able to work with the inmate as the inmate prepares to transition back into society by notifying Support Enforcement Services that the inmate has been released or discharged and should be given a grace period of at least 60 to 90 days to help them get on their feet before making child support payments. Additionally, the Department can assist with mentoring programs for the children of the incarcerated and refer inmates with child support obligations to and prioritize them for parenting programs. For these reasons, the Department of Correction supports Raised Bill 446 and urges your favorable consideration of this Bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on this matter.